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James Clear

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Simon says

This book does a great job of laying down the framework of how habits are formed, and shares insightful strategies for building good habits and breaking bad ones. Even though I was already familiar with research behind habit formation, reading through this book helped me approach habits I'm trying to adopt or break in my own life from different angles.

But the book suffers from the same problems that seem to plague all self-help books. In the chapter about tracking habits, the author shares an anecdote about Benjamin Franklin's habit of carrying a journal everywhere to track thirteen virtues. If you care to know more about that story, Franklin tried to make a habit of his thirteen virtues by turning it into a thirteen week course where he would work on a different virtue every week and track his progress. The author conveniently leaves out the fact that Franklin quickly found this method impractical and abandoned the project before getting through all thirteen virtues. There's a lot of irony in including this anecdote in a chapter that talks about the importance of not "breaking the chain". So while the author isn't entirely wrong, I found it off-putting that he would retell this story in a manner that fit his narrative. This is a vice that is found all too commonly in self-help and pop science books that make you question the author's intellectual rigour.

Another criticism I have of this book is that it could have been even shorter. The last few chapters under "Advanced Tactics" that deal with the topic of mastery were the weakest in the book. While there is an obvious connection between habits and mastery, trying to tie in a topic as complex as mastery was perhaps too ambitious.

The three star rating I am giving this book doesn't reflect how important I consider habits to be. I completely agree with the author that habits are the cornerstone of your life. If you want to change your life in any meaningful way, the only dependable way I know is to build good habits. If you need convincing that habits are important, I would strongly recommend this book. If you are already convinced but struggling to adopt or break habits, racing through this book will give you some good ideas about how you can make changes stick.

Hampus Jakobsson says

TLDR;

- "You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems."
- The best way of building a habit is making it part of your identity.
- Make it easy to start: Habits are the entry point - not the goal. "Read 30 books" ⇒ "Read before bed every night" ⇒ "Read one page". Reduce a habit into a 2-minute first step.
- Stick to the plan: "Professionals stick to the schedule, amateurs let life get in the way." Don't be a "fair weather runner" if you want to run a lot.
- Make it hard to do the things you want to avoid.

Most modern "American self-help books for engineers or entrepreneurs" (it is a category for me) are too repetitive and too long. Atomic Habits is not! It does have the category-required set of stories of American (mostly men) who built a great habit and got to the top - but just the right amount.

----- NOTES -----

Identity

The three levels of change - the lower the more "fundamental":

3. Outcomes = Your goals

2. Processes = Your system

1. Identity = Who you perceive yourself to be

Make every action is a vote for what kind of person you want to become. Building habits is becoming the version of yourself you want to be. Habits help you to trust yourself.

- Realize that "You don't _have to_ do anything, you _get to_."

- Ask "What would a healthy person do?".

- Ask "What feel like fun to you, but is work to others?"

Engineer it so that:

Things you want to achieve vs Things you want to avoid

Obvious ————— Invisible

Attractive ————— Unattractive

Easy ————— Hard

Satisfying ————— Satisfying

For example: if you want to watch less TV - keep it unplugged - only plugin if you can say out loud the name of the show you want to watch.

Annie says

Before starting this book, write down some good habits you want to build and some bad habits you want to break. This book is filled with practical steps and examples. Yes, there are plenty of habit-building books out there (just as there are plenty of diet books but yet there are still more new books published every year).

Plenty of people are seeking the right book that resonates with them. The key points in this book are:

* Compound Effect - Very small changes over time will have a big impact.

* Habit Building Techniques - Make good habits into routines; use positive reinforcements and other techniques outlined in the book.

* Monitor and Measure - Keep track of your progress and improvements.

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From reader reviews:

Lela Koehn:

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